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ABSTRACT

This document is an amalgam of three leaflets describing various aspects of the Competence Based Learning Program (CBL) of Alverno College, Milwaukee. The first document, "Historical Development of CBL at Alverno," is a concise history of the movement from the recognition of a need for change in the teacher preparation program in 1969, through the planning procedure, to the inauguration of the program in 1973. Document two presents a list of eight competencies of six levels each, the mastery of which leads to an Associate of Arts degree or a Bachelor of Arts degree depending upon the number and difficulty of skill levels attained in each competency. Document three presents assessment criteria for each of the eight competencies for levels one through four. (MB)

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# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CBL AT ALVERNO

Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Alverno CBL program which became operational one month ago, in September 1973, has been four years in the making. As a result of faculty and student discontent with the quality of their learning interaction during the 1968-69 academic year, the 1969-70 academic year began with a series of activities innocuously titled "September '69." The reason for the title was to enable the mutual raising of questions concerning responsibilities for learning to take place in an atmosphere that was not pre-charged by slogans or a provocative title. There was enough potential dynamite in the role reversal implicit in the activities that constituted the three-day experience.

What was begun that September may be termed a consciousness-raising activity which set in motion a discussion ranging from course flexibility to interdisciplinary courses to a suggestion for a completely unstructured initiating college experience for freshmen. It was a time of exploring on the part of both faculty and students of the whole potential gamut of academic change. Though there was movement over the next two years, it was somewhat fitful. In spring 1971, these extended discussions and ideas again came to focus in a series of meetings that highlighted the following questions.

1. What kinds of questions are being asked by professionals in your field that relate to the validity of your discipline in a total college program? In other words, what are the burning issues? What is your department's position on these? How are you dealing with these current problems in the general education courses and in the work for a major in your field?
2. What are you teaching that is so important that students cannot afford

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to bypass courses in your department(s)?

3. If we expressed general education requirements in terms of expected outcomes rather than in terms of courses, what contributions does your department make to them?
4. How do you see your department in relation to other disciplines?
5. (For the professional departments: Nursing, education, music, physical education, medical technology) In what way are courses in your department integrated into the liberal arts college so that they differ from those in a purely professional school?

Within those discussions, what began as a question of outcomes of general and professional education became a question of outcomes of liberal education. With consensus that an effort should be made to achieve a working definition of such outcomes, the faculty undertook this effort at the May 1971 Faculty Institute.

Four outcomes were identified: Problem-solving, Communication, Valuing and Involvement. It was agreed that the committee structure for the coming year, 1971-72, would be the entire faculty in a Curriculum Committee, subdivided into four task forces on the basis of the four outcomes. Each task force, which included students, was to work with one outcome to define it in such a way that it could serve as a guide for curriculum change.

In the spring of 1972, a matrix setting forth these outcomes of learning as student goals and indicating a strategy for achieving them was presented to the entire faculty. The further refining of this matrix was the work of the Faculty Institute of May 1972.

To facilitate the work of restructuring the learning environment so that the

emphasis on outcomes would gradually become the focus as much as inputs, an Academic Task Force was set in motion by releasing four faculty members half time.

The work of 1972-73, then, was focused first on the production of a rationale for the program — a paper which came to be titled "Liberal Learning in a Management Context." The work undertaken this year was also to see the major breakthrough of the program in the effort to assess and graduate a student on the basis of the achievement of competence in the context of content. The faculty had agreed on eight competences as a working set of outcomes of liberal learning. The development of six developmental levels for each competence became the basis for the concept of the competence level unit (CLU) which enabled Alverno to set aside the credit hour accumulated into semester hours as the basis for the baccalaureate degree. This is the unique aspect of the Alverno program.

The continued refining of the specific abilities associated with each level is work yet to be completed. It is at the heart of the development of assessment instruments and procedures necessary both for student appraisal and program validation.

With the document on competence levels, Alverno was able to undertake the curriculum work it had envisioned since 1969. In summary, the process for curricular change spread over these years looks like this:

1969 - Becoming conscious of need for change

1970 - Focusing in on areas for change

1971 - Concepting the kind of change

1972 - Designing the guidelines for the form and the structure of curricular change

1973 - Inaugurating the preliminary levels of CBL

Competence-based liberal learning in a management context, at this point in time, however, is still held within the parameters of the curriculum that preceded it — namely, the traditional liberal arts disciplines with strong professional programs in education and nursing. Now the entire set of curricular options (content) must be broadened just as the process of education at Alverno has been broadened by competence measured by achievement (CLU's) rather than accumulation of time exposures (credit hours).

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ALVERNO COLLEGE
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

COMPETENCE-BASED LEARNING PROGRAM

**Competences and Developmental Levels**

With demonstrated achievement in any one of these levels the student receives one competence level unit (CLU). An Associate of Arts degree is awarded when the first 4 levels of each of the eight competences have been demonstrated. For a bachelor's degree, in addition to these 32 CLU's the student must achieve another 8 CLU's, at least one of them to be at level 6. In general, higher levels of any given competence will require more time and effort to achieve than will the lower ones.

**Competence 1: Develop effective communications skill**

Level 1 – Identify own strengths and weaknesses as initiator and responder in communication situations of the following types, including a variety of audiences: written, oral, use of graphs

Level 2 – Analyze written and oral communication situations

Level 3 – Communicate with clarity of message-exchange in communication situations of the following types, including a variety of audiences: written, oral, use of graphs

Level 4 – Demonstrate sufficient understanding of basic concepts of at least 3 major areas of knowledge to communicate in terms of them

Level 5 – Demonstrate understanding of communication as historical process involving development of meaning and form in relation to technological and cultural forces

Level 6 – Communicate effectively through coordinated use of 3 different media that represent contemporary technological advancement in the communications field

**Competence 2: Sharpen analytical capabilities**

Level 1 – Identify explicit elements of a work (A work may be an article, artifact, or process)

Level 2 – Identify implicit elements of a work

Level 3 – Identify relationships in a work

Level 4 – Analyze the structure and organization of a work

Level 5 – In the interpretation and/or creation of one or more works, develop new hypotheses, new conclusions, or new relations of materials and means of production

Level 6 – Produce a single work that demonstrates facility in 3 types of analysis: elements, relationships, organizing priniciples

**Competence 3: Develop workable problem-solving skill**

Level 1 – Identify the process, assumptions, and limitations involved in the scientific method

Level 2 – Formulate questions which yield to the problem-solving approach

Level 3 – Apply the problem-solving process to a problem

Level 4 – Apply the problem-solving process to a new area of knowledge (area different from problem in Level 3)

Level 5 – Design and implement original research project of sufficient complexity to involve direction of or collaboration with others

Level 6 – Demonstrate that problem solving is an assumed approach in one's own search for knowledge and one's reflection upon experience

**Competence 4: Develop a facility for making value judgments and independent decisions**

Level 1 – Identify own values

Level 2 – Demonstrate understanding of philosophy, history, religion, arts, and/or literature as reflection of values

Level 3 – Demonstrate understanding of relationship of values to scientific and technological development

Level 4 – Make value judgments for which you (a) identify viable alternatives and (b) forecast and weigh consequences

Level 5 – Demonstrate understanding of the validity of value systems differing from culture to culture

Level 6 – Communicate value judgments effectively, either to defend them or to persuade others to them, and demonstrate commitment to them

**Competence 5: Develop facility for social interaction**

Level 1 – Identify and analyze own strengths and weaknesses in group situations

Level 2 – Analyze behavior of others within a theoretical framework

Level 3 – Evaluate behavior of self and others within a theoretical framework

Level 4 – Demonstrate effective social behavior in variety of situations and circumstances – both private and public, within one's own culture

Level 5 – Demonstrate effective social behavior in variety of situations and circumstances, beyond as well as on college campus, involving different cultures or subcultures and large as well as small groups

Level 6 – Demonstrate effective organizational activity

**Competence 6: Achieve understanding of the relationship of the individual and the environment**

Level 1 – Identify environmental components

Level 2 – Indentify relationships between individual attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviors, and environmental components

Level 3 – Demonstrate an understanding of the interaction effects of cultural and physical setting upon individual and group behavior

Level 4 – Analyze alternative courses of action regarding a particular environmental problem on the basis of their feasibility, cultural acceptability, and technical accuracy

Level 5 – Assess the consequences of various courses of action in regard to a selected environmental problem and the likelihood that goals will be achieved

Level 6 – Defend a choice among solutions to a particular environmental problem

**Competence 7: Develop awareness and understanding of the world in which the individual lives**

Level 1 – Demonstrate awareness, perception and knowledge of observable events in the contemporary world

Level 2 – Analyze contemporary events in their historical context

Level 3 – Analyze interrelationships of contemporary events and conditions

Level 4 – Demonstrate understanding of the world as a global unit by analyzing the impact of events of one society upon another

Level 5 – Demonstrate understanding and acceptance of personal responsibility in contemporary events

Level 6 – Take personal position regarding implications of contemporary events

**Competence 8: Develop knowledge, understanding, and responsiveness to the arts and knowledge and understanding of the humanities** (Levels 1 and 3 of this competence are to be achieved for a total of 3 arts and/or humanities including at least 1 of each)

Level 1 – For each selected art, express response and demonstrate understanding of elements, and for each selected humanity, demonstrate understanding of the elements characteristic of its method

Level 2 – Express response to and demonstrate understanding of one of the arts in relationship to other arts, and demonstrate understanding of an artistic work as an expression of philosophy, religion, or history

Level 3 – Express response to and demonstrate understanding of the arts, and demonstrate understanding of the humanities, in both cases as expressions of interrelationships between the individual and society

Level 4 – Demonstrate understanding of works of other cultures and their impact upon modes of expression of one's own culture

Level 5 – Formulate independent judgments regarding the relative intrinsic and extrinsic values of artistic or humanistic expressions and persuasively communicate the significance of their worth

Level 6 – Demonstrate facility of self-expression in one or more artistic or humanistic modes and commitment to their importance

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Competence Assessment Program
Alverno College

October, 1973

Assessment for Levels 1 and 2

| Competency | Level 1 | Level 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations each for analysis of oral and written communications |
| 2 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study |
| 3 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study, including one in which scientific method and terminology is explicit | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study, including one in which scientific method and terminology is explicit |
| 4 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations in different contexts | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations in different areas of study |
| 5 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations<br>Assessment Center for variety and completeness |
| 6 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in AC |
| 7 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations in different contexts |
| 8 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations:<br>1 or 2 in an art, and<br>1 or 2 in a humanity | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations:<br>1 in an art, and<br>1 in history, philosophy, or religious studies |

Validation: ~~credentialization~~ by an authorized person on the basis of registered performance specifications

context: course or course equivalent

Competence Assessment Program
Alverno College

October, 1973

Assessment for Levels 3 and 4

| Competency | Level 3 | Level 4 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations, including at least one oral and one written |
| 2 | Assessment in course or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>3 validations in different areas of study |
| 3 | Assessment in course or course equivalent:<br>1 validation<br>Upon completion, filed in Assessment Center for consultative use by faculty person in assessing Level 4 competence | Assessment in course or course equivalent:<br>1 validation<br>Upon completion, filed in Assessment Center for consultative use by faculty person in assessing Level 5 competence |
| 4 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations in different contexts | Assessment in AC |
| 5 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>5 validations<br>Assessment Center for variety and completeness |
| 6 | Assessment in AC | Assessment in AC |
| 7 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>1 validation | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations: 1 of each aspect |
| 8 | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations:<br>1 in an art<br>1 in a humanity | Assessment in courses or course equivalents:<br>2 validations:<br>1 in an art<br>1 in a humanity |